

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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MARKEY CALLS FOR SECURITY UPGRADES FOR TRANSPORT OF DEADLY CHEMICALS

**Congressman to reintroduce bill in wake of South Carolina tragedy, Pennsylvania
derailment**

Washington, DC: Representative Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, today announced that he would soon re-introduce a bill to require the Department of Homeland Security to impose additional security requirements for shipments of extremely hazardous materials, including re-routing of such shipments around areas that raise particular security concerns whenever possible.

“Today’s derailment of a train carrying deadly hydrogen fluoride in Pennsylvania is the latest reminder of the public safety hazards created by these toxic trains. While today’s accident did not result in fatalities, the fumes released during the crash in South Carolina earlier this month killed 9 people and caused hospitalizations and widespread evacuations. Across the country, enough chlorine to kill 100,000 people in half an hour is routinely contained in a single rail tanker car that rolls right through crowded urban centers without adequate security protections” said Rep. Markey. “Today’s accident and the tragedy in South Carolina should serve as two loud wake-up calls to the Department of Homeland Security that new security upgrades are urgently needed. The industry, with the encouragement of the Bush Administration, claims it can’t afford to beef up security and re-route the most dangerous materials. The reality is that *we can’t afford not to do so.*” Rep. Markey said.

Each day hundreds of thousands of shipments of extremely hazardous materials travel through densely populated areas and near critical infrastructure. In 2003, an Ohio-based Al Qaeda operative was arrested for plotting to collapse a bridge in New York City or derail a train in DC. He has since pled guilty. Last year, Rep. Markey introduced H.R. 4824 to improve the security surrounding the transportation of extremely hazardous materials. The bill Rep. Markey will re-introduce this year calls on the Secretary of DHS to promulgate regulations to:

- Require the Department of Homeland Security to re-route the most dangerous materials (the ones like chlorine that are toxic by inhalation, and highly flammable or explosive materials) around densely populated or other sensitive areas when a safer route is available.
- Increase the physical security measures surrounding shipments of extremely hazardous materials, such as extra security guards and the use of more surveillance technologies

- Require the use of technologies that could make railcars full of toxic gases such as chlorine more resistant to punctures
- Require increased coordination between the industry, the law enforcement community and first responders so that emergency personnel are notified before toxic chemicals are transported through their jurisdictions and have response plans in place.
- Require training for employees who work with shipments of these materials.
- Provide whistleblower protections for personnel who report security or safety problems.
- Impose civil and administrative penalties for those who fail to comply with the regulations.

“Not until after the devastating 9/11 attacks were significant, comprehensive security improvements made to our aviation system. We must not wait until after another deadly rail accident or a terrorist strike against a shipment of toxic chemicals before we take action to upgrade the security surrounding the shipments of extremely hazardous materials. Now is the time to address this urgent issue,” Rep. Markey concluded.